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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application. No. : National Phase Application of PCT/IB03/00299  
Applicant : Ario De MARCO et al.  
Filed : Herewith  
TC/A.U. :  
Examiner :  
  
Docket No. : 3198-101  
Customer No. : 6449

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Director of the United States Patent  
and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

***INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS***

Prior to examination of the U.S. national phase application filed concurrently herewith, please amend the application as follows.

*Amendments to the Specification* begin on page 2 of this paper. Material added has been indicated by underlining (underlining) and material deleted has been indicated by strikethrough (~~strikethrough~~).

*Amendments to the Claims* begin on page 3 of this paper. Material added has been indicated by underlining (underlining) and material deleted has been indicated by strikethrough (~~strikethrough~~).

*Remarks* begin on page 12 of this paper.